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Financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara

Financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

Note by the Secretary-General

1. By its resolution 61/290 on the financing of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the General Assembly appropriated for MINURSO the total amount of $46,471,700 gross for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, inclusive of $44,321,600 gross for the maintenance of the Mission, $1,849,200 gross for the support account for peacekeeping operations and $300,900 gross for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi, Italy.

2. Resources approved by the General Assembly for MINURSO provided for the deployment of 203 military observers, 27 military contingent personnel, 6 United Nations police officers, 115 international staff, 152 national staff, 24 United Nations Volunteers and 10 Government-provided personnel, as well as for operational costs related to their support.

3. During the budget period, however, the resource requirements of the Mission increased owing to the deployment under new contracts of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, in June and August 2007, respectively, resulting in an increase of some $3.0 million in the projected aircraft rental and operation costs for the period.

4. Furthermore, as a result of the depreciation of the value of the United States dollar with respect to the Moroccan dirham, from 8.31 dirhams to the dollar in July 2007 to 7.21 dirhams to the dollar in April 2008, additional requirements are projected for the rotation of MINURSO military observers ($344,100), national staff salaries and related costs ($108,800), acquisition of vehicles and fuel ($89,500), communications ($49,700) and information technology services ($22,600) provided locally, freight costs and the cost of rations under other supplies, services and equipment ($74,300). In addition, training-related travel for participation in the senior mission administrative and resource training and the Galileo fleet management system programmes, as well as official travel by the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General to political meetings owing to the resumption of talks between the parties ($89,500), also contributed to overall increased requirements for the 2007/08 period.

5. The resulting additional requirements projected for the 2007/08 period are estimated at $3,870,500 gross ($4,105,500 net) and will be offset by the projected unutilized balance of $2,116,300 gross and net, which is attributable primarily to an overall projected average vacancy rate for international staff of 22 per cent, compared with the 10 per cent vacancy rate applied in the budget, and to the cancellation of the acquisition of observation equipment.

6. Accordingly, as shown in the table below, the projected requirements for the maintenance of MINURSO for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 would amount to $46,075,800 gross ($44,210,400 net), representing an increase of $1,754,200 gross ($1,989,200 net), compared to the appropriation of $44,321,600 gross ($42,221,200 net) approved by the General Assembly for the maintenance of the Mission in its resolution 61/290.

Additional resource requirements for the period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008

(Thousands of United States dollars)

			Variance	
	Apportionment	*Total projected expenditure*	*Amount*	*Percentage*
Category	*(1)*	*(2)*	*(3)=(1)-(2)*	*(4)=(3)÷(1)*
Military and police personnel				
Military observers	5 3712.0	5 715.3	(344.1)	(6.4)
Military contingents	737.0	695.5	41.5	5.6
United Nations police	150.6	145.4	5.2	3.5
Formed police units	—	—	—	—
Subtotal	**6 258.8**	**6 556.2**	**(297.4)**	**(4.8)**
Civilian personnel				
International staff	13 313.0	11 365.6	1 947.4	14.6
National staff	2 732.2	2 841.0	(108.8)	(4.0)
United Nations Volunteers	761.0	838.3	(77.3)	(10.2)
General temporary assistance	77.5	67.6	9.9	12.7
Subtotal	**16 883.7**	**15 112.5**	**1 771.2**	**10.5**
Operational costs				
Government-provided personnel	42.4	35.1	7.3	17.3
Civilian electoral observers	—	—	—	—
Consultants	26.4	—	26.4	100.0
Official travel	402.7	500.3	(97.6)	(24.2)
Facilities and infrastructure	3 675.9	3 652.5	23.4	0.6
Ground transportation	2 524.1	2 613.6	(89.5)	(3.5)

Category	Apportionment	Total projected expenditure	Variance	
			Amount	Percentage
	(1)	(2)	(3)=(1)-(2)	(4)=(3)÷(1)
Air transportation	11 141.1	14 147.7	(3 006.6)	(27.0)
Naval transportation	—	—	—	—
Communications	1 656.1	1 705.8	(49.7)	(3.0)
Information technology	705.4	728.0	(22.6)	(3.2)
Medical	162.2	154.7	7.5	4.6
Special equipment	47.7	—	47.7	100.0
Other supplies, services and equipment	795.1	869.4	(74.3)	(9.3)
Quick-impact projects	—	—	—	—
Subtotal	**21 179.1**	**24 407.1**	**(3 228.0)**	**(15.2)**
Gross requirements	**44 321.6**	**46 075.8**	**(1 754.2)**	**(4.0)**
Staff assessment income	2 100.4	1 865.4	235.0	11.2
Net requirements	**42 221.2**	**44 210.4**	**(1 989.2)**	**(4.7)**
Voluntary contributions in kind (budgeted)	3 315.6	3 315.6	—	—
Total requirements	**47 637.2**	**49 391.4**	**(1 754.2)**	**(3.7)**

7. In the context of its review of the Secretary-General's request for an additional appropriation, with assessment, for the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus for the 2004/05 period (A/59/718), the Advisory Committee, in paragraph 8 of its related report (A/59/734), indicated that it was of the opinion that requests for revised appropriations should be made only in exceptional circumstances, and, taking into account the relatively minor amount being requested, the Committee recommended that any additional requirement be reported in the performance report.

8. As at 14 April 2008, outstanding contributions to the Special Account for MINURSO amounted to $46.9 million, which is almost equivalent to the appropriation for the 2007/08 period, resulting in a three-month operating cash reserve deficit of $6.4 million (as at 14 April 2008). Against this background, the Secretariat considers the circumstances of the request for additional appropriation, with assessment, exceptional, owing to the fact that: (a) the additional requirements relate primarily to cash resources for payments for aircraft rental and operations, rotation of military observers, national staff salaries and related costs, as well as payments to commercial vendors for goods and services; and (b) while the additional requirements represent 4.0 per cent of the approved budget for MINURSO, the Mission does not have the capacity to absorb them.

9. **The actions to be taken by the General Assembly in connection with the financing of MINURSO are the appropriation and assessment of the amount of $1,754,200 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008, in addition to the amount of $44,321,600 already appropriated for the same period for the maintenance of the Mission under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 61/290.**